

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 1, 2009. Claims 1, 12, and 14 are in the application, with Claims 1 and 14 being independent. Claim 14 has been newly added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,034,506 (Hall). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, (i) a switch configured to series connect said plurality of cells to extract electric power from the series-connected plurality of cells through said pair of first electrodes when said switch is in a closed state, and configured to electrically separate said plurality of cells from one another to individually access each of said plurality of cells through said pair of second electrodes when said switch is an open state, and (ii) the charger comprises a charging/discharging unit which charges and discharges each of said plurality of cells individually through said pair of second electrodes.

Claim 14 recites, *inter alia*, (i) a switch configured to series connect the plurality of cells to extract electric power from the series-connected plurality of cells through said pair of first electrodes when said switch is in a closed state, and configured to electrically separate the plurality of cells from one another to individually access each of the plurality of cells through said pair of second electrodes when said switch is an open state, and (ii) said charger comprises a charging/discharging unit which charges and discharges each of the plurality of cells individually through said pair of second electrodes.

Hall is not seen to disclose or suggest at least the above-discussed features.

The Office Action alleges that Hall's switches Sb, shown in Figure 3, correspond to the switch of the present invention. However, assuming that there are no switches Sa, if the switches Sb are open and the switches Sc are closed, it is Applicant's understanding that the charging current would flow through the top cell B1 only, and would not flow through the other cells B2 to B5. Furthermore, as Applicant understands it, when the switches Sb are closed, it is necessary to open the switches Sa in advance. If the switches Sa are closed while the switches Sb are closed, a short-circuit is formed in each cell. Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that Hall does not disclose a switch configured to series connect a plurality of cells to extract electric power from the series-connected plurality of cells through a pair of first electrodes when the switch is in a closed state, and configured to electrically separate the plurality of cells from one another to individually access each of the plurality of cells through a pair of second electrodes when the switch is an open state. Rather, Hall is seen to disclose that a cooperative operation of switches Sa, Sb, and Sc is required to charge and discharge each cell.

Claim 1 further recites, *inter alia*, said switch changes from the closed state to the open state when said switch is pressed by a projection placed on an attaching portion of either the battery or the charger and the battery is attached to the charger, and said switch changes from the open state to the closed state when the battery is detached from the charger.

Claim 14 further recites, *inter alia*, an attaching portion of either said battery or said charger comprises a projection which makes said switch change to the open state from the closed state when said battery is attached to said charger, and said switch changes from the open state to the closed state when said battery is detached from said

charger.

Hall also is not seen to disclose or suggest the foregoing features.

The dependent claim is also submitted to be patentable because it sets forth additional aspects of the present invention and is dependent from an independent claim discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of the dependent claim is respectfully requested.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

No fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 06-1205.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office by telephone at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

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